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**BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

C.U. Curricular Use.

D.V. Developmental Values.

* * *

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO • GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 38

NOVEMBER, 1984

Number 3

New Titles for Children and Young People

- ✓ Adler, David A. ✓ *Jeffrey's Ghost and the Leftover Baseball Team*; illus. by Jean Jenkins. Holt, 1984. 83-22662. ISBN 0-03-069282-2. 58p. \$8.95.

Ad 2-4 Right from the start, Jeffrey finds that Bradford, the ghost who lives in Jeffrey's new home and who is just his age, is friendly and approachable. When Bradford says he is going to join a team of children who were not accepted by other groups, Jeffrey decides he'll go along. For most of the season, Bradford helps out his own team, invisibly intercepting balls. Jeffrey is delighted when the team wins the league title and he congratulates Bradford when they are at home—but the ghost says he was home with a cold, that the leftover baseball team won on the basis of its own confidence and ability. Not a wholly convincing fantasy, this should appeal to readers because of the baseball sequences, the ghost's participation, and the light, humorous tone.

- ✓ Adler, David A. ✓ *Our Golda: The Story of Golda Meir*; illus. by Donna Ruff. Viking, 1984. 83-16798. ISBN 0-670-53107-3. 52p. \$10.95.

Ad 3-5 A biography of Golda Meir devotes a large portion of the text to her childhood in Russia and in the United States; less than half the book focuses on Meir's life and political involvement in Israel. Pencil illustrations add little to the book save for giving it period flavor through costume details. The writing is simple, a bit stiff, the tone admiring but not adulatory, the coverage adequate. The ending is weak, for it refers to Meir's meeting with Anwar Sadat shortly before her death and it concludes, "It seemed that her dream of *shalom*, peace, might someday come true."

C.U. Israel—History

- ✓ Arnow, Jan. ✓ *Louisville Slugger: The Making of a Baseball Bat*; written and photographed by Jan Arnow. 84-7049. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-96297-4; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-86297-X. 39p. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95.

R 4-6 Photographs are judiciously used to best advantage on spaciouly laid-out pages to accompany a text that describes the origins of the bats ("Louisville Sluggers") made by the firm of Hillerich & Bradsby. The book has some interesting comments on the idiosyncratic preferences of some of baseball's great stars, but it focuses on how bats are made, from choosing the right ash tree to mailing the finished and labelled product. Clear and informative, the book should appeal to baseball fans.

C.U. Industries (unit)

- ✓ Avi. ✓ *Devil's Race*. Lippincott, 1984. 84-47636. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32095-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32094-9. 152p. Library ed. \$9.89; Trade ed. \$10.50.

M
6-9 John Proud, the adolescent narrator, learns from his uncle that an ancestor by the same name had been an evil man who was hanged in 1854, that John Proud was a demon, and that his ghost still prowls about. Save for the most confirmed devotees of the occult, the plodding story is not likely to appeal to readers, since it is slow-paced, repetitive, and unconvincing. This is a story of possession, with the narrator in danger until he finds a way to outwit his ancestral demon.

✓ Beatty, Patricia. ✓ *Turn Homeward, Hannalee*. Morrow, 1984. 84-8960. ISBN 0-688-03871-9. 193p. \$10.50.

R
5-8 More serious than most of Beatty's stories, this solid historical fiction shows how the Civil War affected one segment of the population—the southern mill workers—and is based on fact. Northern soldiers did burn down textile mills and, considering the workers traitors, sent them away from their homes. Here the protagonists are Hannalee and Jem, twelve and ten, who are shipped from their Georgia town (and their recently widowed, pregnant mother) to Indiana, where they are offered as workers to anyone who wants them. Jem is sent to a farm, Hannalee works as housemaid for a mistress so demanding that she runs away; after earning some money, Hannalee (by now disguised, for safety's sake, as a boy) collects her brother and they make their way back to home and mother. This is a very effective story, creating vividly the tragedy and disruption for ordinary people, showing clearly that there were villains and heroes on both sides of the bitter conflict. Structure, characterization, and style are solid; an extensive author's note points out those parts of the story that are factual and gives some background information about the Civil War.

C.U. History—U.S.

D.V. Courage

✓ Bible. ✓ *The Christmas Story*; illus. by Elisa Trimby. Faber, 1984. 84-7836. ISBN 0-688-02444-0. 22p. \$10.25.

Ad
All
ages First published in Great Britain, this newly-illustrated version of the Nativity is based on the King James Version of the Bible. The softly-colored but often awkwardly drawn pictures are busy with hatching and parallel lines, so that there is a crowding of detail that infringes on the otherwise effective composition. Trimby uses light cleverly to show the figures of the angels when they appear to Mary and to the shepherds.

C.U. Christmas; Religious education

✓ Blume, Judy. ✓ *The Pain and the Great One*; illus. by Irene Trivas. Bradbury, 1984. 84-11009. ISBN 0-02-711100-8. 28p. \$10.95.

R
K-3 Ink and watercolor illustrations that have considerable vitality and humor extend a text that is based on part of *Free to Be... You and Me*, by Marlo Thomas and others. Blume adds insight and wit in this fresh and wistfully funny adaptation; in separate monologues, a boy of six (The Pain) is described by his sister, two years older (The Great One) and he offers his scathing opinion of her in the other. What emerges is a perfect picture of sibling rivalry and jealousy, and both monologues end with "I think they love her/him better than me." In both cases, this gloomy suspicion is preceded by a hearty "YUCK!" as a climax to the listing of the most grievous sins of the other. Right on target and very amusing.

D.V. Brothers-sisters

✓ Branley, Franklyn Mansfield. ✓ *Comets*; illus. by Giulio Maestro. Crowell, 1984. 83-46161. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-00415-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04414-3. 30p. (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science Books). Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

R
K-3 Former chairman of the Hayden Planetarium and a prolific author of children's astronomy books, Branley writes with authority, simplicity, and clarity, in a carefully illustrated book on comets. He explains their development, their orbits, and their composition and focuses on what is known about Halley's comet, which will be visible in 1986. Maestro uses a black night sky as the background for most of his pictures, a very effective way of showing planets, comets, dust clouds, and other phenomena that are bright against the darkness. Like most of Branley's books, impeccable.

C.U. Science

✓ Brenner, Barbara. ✓ *The Gorilla Signs Love*. Lothrop, 1984. 84-841. ISBN 0-688-00995-6. 205p. \$9.75.

Ad
7-9 Working in Africa with a scientist who is studying the behavior of a troop of gorillas, adolescent Maggie is much impressed by the ability of one gorilla, Naomi, to communicate by sign language. When, later, Naomi is captured and ill, Maggie's scientist father helps her acquire the animal for nursing and training. Naomi achieves a remarkable command of sign language, shows unusual intelligence, indicates that she can understand abstract concepts as well as recognizing objects and actions. Brenner has tossed in a double love story (one for Maggie, one for her divorced father) and has concocted a series of situations to create suspense about what will happen to the gorilla, but this is primarily a vehicle for giving the sort of information about primate training that is usually reported in books of nonfiction. The writing style is adequate; the use of first person makes it possible for Maggie to convey with convincing ardor her relationship with her father, her suitor, and her beloved Naomi.

D.V. Animals, kindness to

✓ Brown, Marc Tolon. ✓ *Arthur's Christmas*; written and illus. by Marc Brown. Little, 1984. 84-4373. ISBN 0-316-11180-5. 31p. \$12.95.

R
2-3 Trying to decide on a gift to Santa, Arthur notes that everywhere he goes, Santa seems to be eating. (Readers will enjoy feeling superior as *they* note that all the Santas are different.) Arthur mixes up some dreadful food combinations, and his crafty sister gets rid of the food and leaves a letter (ostensibly from Santa) to thank Arthur. It ends, "P.S. Aren't you lucky to have such a nice little sister?" Young readers or the lap audience for which this is also appropriate will enjoy, as they have with earlier Arthur books, the animal characters, the scruffy paintings of everyday objects, and the light style that unerringly reflects children's attitudes.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Brunhoff, Laurent de. ✓ *Babar's Book of Color*; written and illus. by Laurent de Brunhoff. Random House, 1984. 84-42737. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-96896-4; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-86896-X. 28p. Library ed. \$7.99; Trade ed. \$6.95.

Babar gives his children pots of paint and they talk about their favorite colors as they learn how to use the primary colors (and black and white) to get other colors. Save for the fact that this shows how to get pink or gray or tan, it is very much like

Ad 3-6 yrs. other first books on color. Nothing startlingly new here, but it's a useful addition to other books about color, and it will probably appeal—despite the fact that it isn't a story—to Babar fans.

✓ Bunting, Eve. ✓ *Surrogate Sister*. Lippincott, 1984. 83-49483. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32099-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32098-1. 213p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

R 7-10 There is something new under the sun, at least new in books for young adults, for Bunting, in a nicely structured and thoughtfully written novel, explores the feelings of a sixteen-year-old-girl whose widowed mother has become pregnant (by artificial insemination) in response to a desperate appeal from a childless couple whom she never meets. For her daughter, the decision seems an outrage. What will her friends say? (They say some very nasty things, some of them; others think Cassie's mother is wonderful). Cassie fears that her mother is accepting the money for this child-bearing to help her, but learns that Mom plans to use it for a long-dreamed-of nursing course. Cassie's also disturbed by falling in love with a college student who's about to go off for a year of study abroad. The book has strong characters, good pace, balanced treatment, and a very good handling of the issues of surrogate motherhood, incorporating them smoothly into the narrative so that this is not a fictionalized case history but a compelling story.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations

✓ Carris, Joan Davenport. ✓ *Pets, Vets, and Marty Howard*; illus. by Carol Newsom. Lippincott, 1984. 84-47635, Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32093-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32092-2. 186p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

R 5-7 Marty, who tells the story, is sure that he wants to become a veterinarian, and convinces his parents that a part-time job with Dr. Cameron won't affect his school work. It does, however, and it also cuts out social life and time with his family. Marty enjoys it, but he worries about the strays that people leave at the hospital doorstep and he learns that he doesn't enjoy every aspect of the job. Wise Dr. Cameron suggests that he has time to think about it and perhaps to choose an affiliated field, and she proposes that he work once a week rather than every day after school. The setting is interesting, the story is incidentally informative, and the narrow focus is alleviated by variety within the scope of Marty's activities, and by the warm relationships he has with people.

D.V. Animals, kindness to; Occupational orientation

✓ Carter, Peter. ✓ *Children of the Book*. Oxford/Merrimack, 1984. ISBN 0-19-271456-2. 271p. \$13.95.

R 8- In an engrossing account of the Siege of Vienna in 1683, Carter puts together a wonderfully coherent and cohesive collage, focusing on individuals who played major roles in the conflict (kings and counselors and military leaders) and on individuals who are the little people of history. The leaders are real, the little people (like a Viennese baker's family, a Polish lout, a young recruit in the Turkish army) are fictional, and the story knits their lives together smoothly, deftly, in a polished style and with gathering momentum. The text has been carelessly edited ("It's incredible. Simple incredible," or "...the fords...was defended...") but the errors are minor when weighed against the sweep of the story, the wit of the writing, and the breadth of historical information.

C.U. History—Europe

D.V. Courage; Patriotism

✓ Colman, Hila. ✓ *Just the Two of Us*. Scholastic, 1984. ISBN 0-590-32512-4. 168p. Paper. \$2.25.

Ad 6-9 Fourteen-year-old Samantha is the narrator, and she has just come to a small New England town with her father, Lenny. Her mother had died when Sam was an infant; she has lived a very happy life with Lenny, moving from place to place and preferring it that way. Sam and Lenny are best friends as well as father and daughter, and Sam doesn't know how jealous she can be until her father falls in love with Liz, a neighbor. Her jealousy colors her relationship with a very nice boy she spurns; it affects her school work; it makes her angry at Lenny and Liz. After Lenny has a minor accident, Liz speaks some home truths; Sam takes a close look at her own attitudes, and she gains perspective and makes her peace with Lenny, Liz, and the appealing Josh. This has a palpably predictable conclusion, but it's sound in its insight and competent in characterization and writing style.

D.V. Adaptability; Father-daughter relations; Stepparents, adjustment to

✓ Colman, Hila. ✓ *Nobody Told Me What I Need to Know*. Morrow, 1984. 84-8673. ISBN 0-688-03869-7. 165p. \$10.95.

R 7-9 Sixteen-year-old Alix has always been perfectly content with her life and her image: the only daughter of two creative intellectuals, she has been exposed only to the best in music, art, and literature. She doesn't know or like popular music; she's never wanted to be like her classmates. Then the O'Carneys move in next door; her parents sneer at their furniture and their life style, but Alix is smitten by the son of the family (who soon turns to an older girl, more accommodating) and begins to feel that her parents are snobs, denying the worth of others and making her feel a misfit in her peer group. The climax of the story is the suicide of Mr. O'Carney, a tragedy that shows Alix and her parents the true mettle of his widow and his son. The story is not strong structurally: the O'Carneys leave, Alix adjusts and makes a date with another boy. It is strong in depicting a contrast in life styles and the lofty complacency of the intellectual snob.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Death, adjustment to; Parent-child relations

✓ Cooney, Caroline B. ✓ *I'm Not Your Other Half*. Pacer/Putnam, 1984. 84-7768. ISBN 0-399-21134-9. 157p. \$10.95.

R 7-10 Fraser, the narrator, has finally fallen in love; she's doubly delighted because Michael is kind and intelligent as well as handsome and because her best friend Annie has also fallen in love. At first Fraser loves their foursome, enjoys giving up her own interests to be with Michael and share his. Gradually, however, she comes to feel that she is being asked to give up too much, that Michael expects her to defer to his interests, and that she's not his "other half," but her own woman. They break up, and Fraser gains enough perspective when alone again to see what she and Michael need is a relationship in which they are "semi-attached." This gives a good picture of an intelligent adolescent going through periods of ambivalence, resentment, and compromise; it's capably written, with adequate characterization and balanced treatment.

D.V. Independence

✓ Davies, Valentine. ✓ *Miracle on 34th Street*; illus. by Tomie dePaola. Harcourt, 1984. 84-3742. ISBN 0-15-254526-3. 118p. \$16.95.

First published as an adult book in 1947, based on the film that crops up on television every Christmas season, this fantasy intended as an antidote to the commer-

M 5- cialism of the holiday is here newly illustrated by dePaola. Sugary and predictable, the story that had some charm as a motion picture is heavy-handed in its message and its sentimentality as a book, and the illustrations, full-color paintings, seem both stiff and inappropriate for older readers. The plot, for those who have not seen the film, concerns a dear little cheery old man who believes he is Santa Claus, who is hired by Macy's to be their Santa Claus, and who is proven in court (in a wholly unconvincing scene) to be the true, the only Santa Claus.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Fisher, Leonard Everett. ✓ *The Olympians: Great Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece*; written and illus. by Leonard Everett Fisher. Holiday House, 1984. 84-516. ISBN 0-8234-0522-2. 28p. \$14.95.

R 4-6 In an oversize book, Fisher describes and pictures the twelve gods and goddesses who dwell on Mount Olympus. Each portrait has a massive, almost sculptured look despite the fact that the paintings are in full color; facing each portrait is a page that gives the Greek and Roman names of the Olympian, his or her parentage, symbols, (fire for Hestia, and the owl, shield, or olive branch for Athena) and their titles (Hades is both God of the Lower World and God of Wealth). On each page a paragraph (sometimes hard to read because of the colored background) describes the god or goddess. This is a handsome book, and it's an excellent introduction to the Greek/Roman pantheon.

✓ Fleischman, Albert Sidney. ✓ *McBroom's Almanac*; illus. by Walter Lorraine. Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1984. 83-9043. Trade ed. ISBN 0-316-26009-6; Paper ed. ISBN 0-316-26011-8. 88p. Trade ed. \$12.95; Paper ed. \$5.95.

R 3-6 Deft, comic line drawings illustrate a compendium of pseudo-advice and humor that is often hilarious. As in other McBroom books, there are tales that depend, in tall-tale style, on exaggeration for their humor; there is word-play ("Freeze & thaw & sunshine fickle—Mercury rides a Pogo stick" is the October motto) and there are ridiculous farming tips, proverbs ("Birds of a feather that flock together make a good target") and assorted bits of nonsensical nature hints and household lore. It's all great fun, and the fact that there are many short bits indicate a potential usefulness for slow or reluctant readers who will find the humor as appealing as do their more proficient peers.

✓ Gaeddert, Louann. ✓ *Daffodils in the Snow*. Dutton, 1984. 84-8159. ISBN 0-525-44150-6. 114p. \$11.95.

Ad 7-9 Beautiful, devout, overprotected by a tyrannical father, Marianne is the last girl in the world her friend Eleanor, the narrator, expects to become pregnant. Denounced in church by her father, Marianne weds a stranger and is later delivered of a son she insists is the child of God. More cynical people suspect that he's the son of the evangelist who had carried a fainting Marianne off to his trailer—and who had later been shot by a man whose wife the evangelist had seduced. The story focuses on the credulity of people—they consider Marianne's daffodils in the snow a miracle and become convinced that her child is a miracle healer. In fact, they will give the family no peace, and eventually Marianne flees with her husband and child to another state where nobody knows of her or her baby. The story ends with Eleanor recounting her own courtship and marriage and the fact that she reads of a commune, years later, where all are welcomed by the never-named leader who is clearly the "miracle baby" grown to manhood. This is interesting in its consideration of where faith ends and

gullibility and superstition begin, but it sags in several places as a story, and none of the characters is strongly enough drawn (although they are all believable) to overcome this inertia.

✓ Galloway, Priscilla. ✓ *When You Were Little and I Was Big*; illus. by Heather Collins. Annick/Firefly, 1984. Trade ed. ISBN 0-920236-84-7; Paper ed. ISBN 0-920236-71-5. 28p. Trade ed. \$10.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

Ad Pencil and paint are used in the drawings that show a small girl telling her mother
3-5 what she would do if she were the parent, while on the facing page the child is big,
yrs. the mother small, and the situation is visually clear. The role reversal is easy to follow because the child has curly blond hair and the mother short, dark hair. The idea is appealing: i.e. the child can do anything she wants and the mother accepts it with equanimity, whether it's unrolling all the toilet paper or picking every daffodil in the garden. At the end, the child says, "When you were little and I was big, I was a good Mommy just like you," implying that the catalogue of actions might be real rather than imagined, which robs the text, weakened to an extent by repetition of pattern, by removing any humor.

D.V. Mother-child relations

✓ Gardner, Beau. ✓ *The Look Again... and Again, and Again and Again Book*; written and illus. by Beau Gardner. Lothrop, 1984. 84-748. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-03806-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-03805-0. 32p. Library ed. \$10.08; Trade ed. \$11.00.

R Although not every view in this turnaround book is successful visually, most of
K-4 them are, and this provides an entertaining experience that has the appeal of a game and that encourages acuteness of observation. Gardner uses colors boldly and simply in square pictures that can be looked at four ways. Each side has a caption (there is no other text) and in one, for example, that has two curving areas of yellow against a cobalt ground, one view is a parrot's beak, another a banana split, a third the claws of a crab, and the last sails, yellow against a blue sea. An intriguing innovation.

D.V. Imaginative powers; Spatial orientation

✓ Goffstein, M.B. ✓ *A Writer*; written and illus. by M.B. Goffstein. Harper, 1984. 83-49488. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022143-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022142-9. 24p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

Ad A small book has a small square of watercolor picture on each recto page and a
K-2 minimal amount of text on the verso page. The format seems in conflict with the message, the former looking like a picture book for young children, the latter a succinct but poetic interpretation of what it means to be a writer. For some children, this will be static and unappealing; for more imaginative ones, it may effectively convey the patient shaping of creativity—but those who respond may be rather older children.

✓ Grigoli, Valorie. ✓ *Service Industries*. Watts, 1984. 84-7579. ISBN 0-531-04832-2. 64p. illus. with photographs. \$8.90.

Ad While this covers a broad range of service industries, it has little depth of
6-8 coverage. Many of the topics (health care, telecommunications) are discussed in more detail in other books; what this book does is present the range of service

industries, define them, describe the growth of personal, social, distributive, and other services in the United States and comment on those services the country exports. The text is dry in tone and staccato in style. Appended are a glossary, an index, and a bibliography that comprises three books and three articles.

C.U. Industries (unit)

✓ Harranth, Wolf. *My Old Granddad*; tr. by Peter Carter; illus. by Christina Opperman-Dimov. Oxford/Merrimack, 1984. ISBN 0-19-279787-5. 24p. \$8.95.

R
K-2 First published in Austria in 1981, this quiet story should have universal appeal; although it may be too static for some readers, it is moving and tender without being sentimentalized. Seen from a small boy's viewpoint is the recently bereaved grandfather who comes from the country to stay with his children and grandchildren in town. The narrator wonders why Granddad can do all the things that are criticized in children (like talking with food in one's mouth) and notices how quiet and isolated Granddad is. Finally, the elderly man goes back to his home in the country, unable to adjust to a new regime. This does not stress the pathos of old age and loneliness unduly, but shows it clearly in a gentle story that is all the more effective because of understatement.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Grandparent-child relations

✓ Harris, Geraldine. ✓ *The Seventh Gate*. Greenwillow, 1984. 83-14084. ISBN 0-688-01759-2. 243p. \$9.50.

R
7-9 The last of a series of four books, "Seven Citadels," first published in England and strong in the tradition of high fantasy and a selfless quest. To save his country, Prince Kerish has been arduously collecting the keys of sorcerers—and now must find the seventh and last. Imprisoned, Kerish and his companions escape to aid in the war that Galkis (his homeland) is waging against a coalition led by O-grak. Kerish journeys to a jungle in search of the seventh sorcerer, who proves to be a woman, the enchantress Tebreega. He gains the seventh key and faces his last mission: using the keys to free the imprisoned "savior of Galkis." Kerish is stunned to see his own reflection. He must choose between withdrawal and peace, and the pain of reincarnation and service as the last Emperor of Galkis...and he chooses the latter. Like most high fantasy, this is intricate in structure and crowded with characters—but Harris has compensated for this by writing with pace and momentum, providing action and variety, and—above all—creating characters with depth and distinction.

D.V. Devotion to a cause; Unselfishness

✓ Hearn, Emily. ✓ *Woosh! I Hear a Sound*; illus. by Heather Collins. Annick/Firefly, 1984. Trade ed. ISBN 0-920236-58-8; Paper ed. ISBN 0-920236-59-6. 25p. Trade ed. \$10.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

NR
2-4
yrs. The soft, uncluttered illustrations alternate, a page with red-tinted pencil drawing and then bright watercolor. The text follows a question/answer pattern: "Listen... do you hear that sound?" Then follows an imitation like "woosh" or "scrunch" or "pitter pat," and the conjecture about what it can be, ending with what it really is. The title "woosh," for example, "Are bees and birds having a party? No, it's Mummy drying her hair." Part of the weakness of the book is in the naming of the sound; it is moot whether an individual really hears a hair-dryer as making a noise that sounds like "woosh," and a second weakness is in the conjecture—for example,

the pictured toddler wonders if "pitter pat" (which proves to be a dripping tap) is a squirrel on the roof.

✓ Hedderick, Mairi. ✓ *Katie Morag Delivers the Mail*; written and illus. by Mairi Hedderick. Bodley Head/Merrimack, 1984. ISBN 0-370-30569-8. 24p. \$9.95.

Ad
4-6
yrs. Delicately tinted and often humorous line drawings effectively illustrate a story set on a Scottish island. Because of a mild family crisis, young Katie is given the job (her parents run the post office) of delivering packages to the other side of the island. Stopping to wade in a pool, young Katie falls in; the packages are as wet as she is, and the only one she can recognize is the one with the red label, which is for her Grannie. (No stereotype, Grannie; her package is a tractor part and she immediately repairs the machine.) Grannie helps Katie get the packages to their proper destinations, and since it is dark by then, Katie invites Grannie to come home with her for tea. "She's very good at sorting things out, is our Katie Morag," says Grannie, and tactfully says no more. This has a quiet humor, a warm grandparent-child relationship, a sturdy enough plot for a read-aloud book, and a cozy feeling of community.

D.V. Grandparent-child relations

✓ Hickman, Martha Whitmore. ✓ *Eeps, Creeps, It's My Room!*; illus. by Mary Alice Baer. Abingdon, 1984. ISBN 0-687-11527-2. 29p. \$9.95.

R
2-4 Despite the caustic comments of his family, Jeffrey's room grew messier and messier until there were numbers of things he couldn't find. When his mother issued an ultimatum, Jeffrey finally went to work—and was, of course, pleased with the result. Cluttered drawings, pink washed, corroborate the story's point but are not either deft or attractive. The text, however, is most appealing in its casual, conversational style and simplicity.

✓ Hoopes, Lyn Littlefield. ✓ *Daddy's Coming Home*; illus. by Bruce Degen. Harper, 1984. 83-47693. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022569-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022568-8. 27p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

M
3-5
yrs. The narrator is the small boy who, excited by the daily treat of a reunion with his father, describes at some length what he sees and hears as he and his mother walk down a country lane to meet him. "MOO, Lizzie, Moo! I see Lizzie—do you? Daddy's coming home; now Lizzie's coming too." The horse neighs, the dog barks, the duck quacks; the boy stops en route for a swing and eventually trots down the hill for a happy hug. This expresses love, but it's a slow message as the speaker detours to play and visit animals (which have their own appeal) and repeat that Daddy's coming home. The illustrations, line and wash, have technical proficiency but blatant use of color and crowding of details in some pictures.

D.V. Father-son relations

✓ Hopkins, Lee Bennett, comp. ✓ *Surprises*; illus. by Megan Lloyd. Harper, 1984. 83-47712. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022585-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022584-X. 61p. (I Can Read Books.) Library ed. \$8.89; Trade ed. \$8.95.

R
1-2 Neatly framed, small-scale drawings that are vigorous, sometimes humorous, seldom graceful, illustrate a collection of poems for the beginning independent reader. A few of the selections have a note of bland contrivance, but most of them

are either good or very good in their brevity, simplicity, freshness, and vision. The book should also be useful for reading aloud to very young children.

C.U. Reading, beginning; Reading aloud

- ✓ Hurwitz, Johanna. ✓ *DeDe Takes Charge!*; illus. by Diane de Groat. Morrow, 1984. 84-9085. ISBN 0-688-03853-0. 121p. \$9.25.

Ad 3-5 DeDe has adjusted well to her parents' divorce, although she often misses her father and finds it embarrassing to be the only "divorced kid" in her class. It's her mother who's had trouble adjusting, letting all the household appliances run down, overeating, and isolating herself. In a series of linked, episodic chapters DeDe tries to help and in fact is fairly successful. This is a cheerful, upbeat book (Mom loses weight and begins to date, both Mom and Dad turn up—and are cautiously friendly to each other—at a mildly disastrous class play) that has little depth of characterization or significant growth but that should appeal because of its balanced treatment, realistic relationships at home and in school, and a pervasive good humor.

D.V. Divorce, adjustment to; Mother-daughter relations

- ✓ Isadora, Rachel. ✓ *Opening Night*; written and illus. by Rachel Isadora. Greenwillow, 1984. 83-20791. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-02727-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-02726-1. 30p. Library ed. \$9.55; Trade ed. \$10.25.

R K-2 The versatile Isadora uses watercolor in soft-edged paintings that capture the backstage atmosphere, the beauty of the costumes, and the fluidity of the dancers in a story that is more setting than plot. Heather and Libby are bugs in the faerie world of "Midsummer Night's Dream" and Heather is nervous about her brief solo on opening night. The text does not give the name of the ballet or explain who Bottom is; there's simply a reference, "There's Bottom. He's so funny," as a male dancer sits with ass-head in place but otherwise uncostumed. This may have to be explained to some children, but most of the activity and dancers' roles are made clear, and the excitement and triumph (roses for both children!) are vividly conveyed.

- ✓ Ivanov, Anatoly, ad. ✓ *Ol' Jake's Lucky Day*; retold and illus. by Anatoly Ivanov. Lothrop, 1984. 83-25645. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-02867-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-02866-7. 24p. Library ed. \$10.08; Trade ed. \$12.00.

Ad 4-6 yrs. Although the names of the characters (Jake and his son John) give no indication of the fact, this is based on a Russian folktale that is reminiscent of the Scandinavian story "Don't Count Your Chicks." In this case, Ol' Jake spots a hare and begins to daydream of the trade he'll make after he catches the hare, a trade that will culminate in a fortune; excited, he cries out and frightens the hare, which runs away. Watery paintings have humor but little finesse.

C.U. Storytelling

- ✓ Johnson, Joan. ✓ *The Cult Movement*. Watts, 1984. 84-7417. ISBN 0-531-04767-9. 106p. illus. with photographs. \$9.90.

R 7-12 Despite the fact that the writing often has a plodding quality, this is an interesting and useful book. Jones discusses the difference between religion and cults, describes the ways in which cults become established, recruit and hold members, become

powerful, and often instill delusions of omnipotence in their leaders. Much of the book is devoted to discussions of specific cults and leaders and to an evaluation of their practices; it considers the special appeal to young people and the difficulty of leaving a cult as well as the dangers of cult life to the individual. A bibliography and an index are provided.

C.U. Social Studies

✓ Knudson, Rozanne R. *Zan Hagen's Marathon*. Farrar, 1984. 84-47843. ISBN 0-374-38811-3. 183p. \$10.95.

Ad 6-9 Spurred on by her friend and coach, Rinehart, Zan decides she will enter the women's marathon in the Los Angeles Olympics. She doesn't make it the first time she tries but subsequently qualifies, all with the enthusiastic support of her classmates and a favorite teacher. Zan goes to L.A. as an alternate and does participate in the grueling marathon, ending her race by running into the Coliseum hand-in-hand with the Chinese runner who has become her friend. Knudson blithely mixes real and fictional figures, and the writing style is often contrivedly cute, but the book has two strong assets: one is the vivid and convincing descriptions of running and the second is the conveyance of the comradeship amongst the Olympic athletes.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Perversance; Sportsmanship

✓ Korschunow, Irina. *The Foundling Fox*; tr. from the German by James Skofield; illus. by Reinhard Michl. Harper, 1984. 84-47631. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023244-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023243-9. 48p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

Ad K-2 A fox kit whose mother has been killed is fed and comforted by a vixen on her way back to the den where she has three kits of her own. She decides to take the foundling with her, evading a pursuing hound and fighting off a predatory badger en route. After she is home, a neighbor asks to see the foundling, but by then the vixen cannot tell the newcomer from the other kits; they are all her children. Hand-some pictures, realistically detailed, are equally effective whether they are black and white drawings or vigorous color paintings. The story is rather heavily laden with message, but the message is one with which the lap audience should feel sympathetic, and they will probably forgive the just-discernible sugar coating.

✓ Krensky, Stephen. *A Ghostly Business*. Atheneum, 1984. 84-2971. ISBN 0-689-31048-X. 144p. \$10.95.

R 4-6 The five Wynd children come to Boston to visit their Aunt Celia, and they're disturbed to find that she is distraught and that odd things are happening in the house. Both, it develops, are caused by a ghost, the former butler of the household, and a gentle, unhappy creature suffering from a curse. He's also being bullied by some other ghosts who are working for a slick realtor who hopes that Aunt Celia will sell him the house if the ghost really perturbs her. Since the children share with Aunt Celia an ability to do magic, a power struggle begins as they try to help their aunt and their ghost against the machinations of others. This light fantasy is consistent within its illogical parameters, and the light style, the humor, the magic, and the triumph of good over evil provide an entertaining reading experience.

✓ Levy, Elizabeth. *The Dani Trap*. Morrow, 1984. 84-9025. ISBN 0-688-03867-0. 136p. \$10.25.

Dani, sixteen, begins her recital with a dramatic incident in which, driving with an

R
6-9 older boy (Michael) who's been drinking, they hit a dog. Michael leaves, and the police who come along are suspicious when they find Dani and the dog in the dark. That's how Dani meets two members of the police force, that's how she gets asked to do undercover work and help the police trap liquor stores that sell to minors, and that's how she comes to be accused of participating in a robbery that's actually going on when she enters the store. With the help of Michael and two other friends, the frame-up is solved, in a believable ending to a fast-paced story. The writing style and dialogue are competent; the message about adolescent drinking is strong, although Michael is not depicted as a worthless character because he drinks.

D.V. Boy-girl relations

✓ Luttrell, Ida. ✓ *One Day at School*; illus. by Jared D. Lee. Harcourt, 1984. 83-18341. Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-258313-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-258314-9. 32p. (Let Me Read Books.) Trade ed. \$9.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

R
2-3 Cartoon-quality drawings (red, white, and black) that have animation and humor, but no grace, illustrate a role-reversal fantasy. Third grade student Arnold, the narrator, gets to school one day to find that he is the teacher and his pupils are all the teachers in his school. This is slapstick, but primary grades readers will probably be delighted by Arnold's regimen: he encourages noise and hurling milk cartons in the lunchroom, he sends his students home to bring their pets to school, he reprimands those who have done their homework and passes bubble gum around. All of this topsy-turvy non-discipline has no didactic message—it's just there to be laughed at, to give reading experience, and possibly to suggest that no discipline could mean chaos.

✓ McDonnell, Margot B. ✓ *My Own Worst Enemy*. Pacer/Putnam, 1984. 84-7722. ISBN 399-21102-0. 192p. \$10.95.

Ad
7-9 Todd, the narrator, describes Robbie as the best friend he ever had—but that friendship comes slowly, after a bitterly hostile relationship when Robbie first comes to town and seems to take everything away from Todd: the girl he loves, the attention of his grandfather, his position on the baseball team. It finally dawns on Todd that Robbie admires him so much he's imitating him, that he couldn't have the girl anyway, and that Robbie has a miserable home situation. This is a capably written first novel, sturdy in characterization and motivation but structurally attenuated, so that the pace is slow.

D.V. Friendship values; Jealousy, overcoming

✓ Magorian, Michelle. ✓ *Back Home*. Harper, 1984. 84-47629. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024104-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024103-9. 375p. Library ed. \$13.89; Trade ed. \$14.50.

Ad
6-8 Like the author's first book, *Good Night, Mr. Tom*, this novel shows how World War II affected some families; here it is the family of Virginia, who is now twelve and has just returned to England after five years of living with an American family. Her father is still in service, her mother has become a skilled automobile mechanic, and there's a jealous four-year-old brother to whom Virginia (used to her U.S. nickname of "Rusty") must adjust. Later in the story both Rusty and her mother try, unsuccessfully, to adjust to the icy, sexist, domineering father and equally tyrannical grandmother (a very sharp portrait indeed) to whom, before the war, they had been unthinkingly subservient. All this would be matter enough for any novel; it is unfortunate that these interesting elements and relationships are overshadowed by what seems to be Magorian's message: British public (to us, private) schools are

intolerably cruel and rigid. This is the only part of the book that seems overdone, since every teacher and all the girls are either flagrantly hostile or (a few) too timid to dare kindness to the miserable Rusty, who begins to sleepwalk and lose weight, who crawls down a scaffolding almost every night (never detected) to escape to a cabin in the woods, who cries by the hour but won't tell her mother how unhappy she is. The book ends on an upbeat, as Virginia goes with her mother and brother to the Devon house Mother has just conveniently inherited, and both children happily begin their studies and play at the local progressive school. Too bad the canvas is so crowded and the message so strong, for the situation and setting are convincing, the characters well-drawn, and the style and sense of story effective.

D.V. Adaptability; Mother-daughter relations

✓ Markham, Marion M. ✓ *The Christmas Present Mystery*; illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. Houghton, 1984. 84-4557. ISBN 0-395-36383-7. 48p. \$10.95.

Ad 3-5 Kate and Mickey, twin sisters who are eleven, become intrigued by the fact that a strange boy's face has somehow appeared in a picture of their own family that they had been planning to give to the uncle they were visiting for Christmas. Assuming detective roles, they discover a way the picture could have been doctored and they find someone who identifies the boy. His name is David, he admits that he altered the photograph and wanted to identify with a family since he was separated from his parents and was lonely. At this point, conveniently, David's father calls to say he and his wife are reunited, and are anxious to have David with them for Christmas. The plot has some contrivance and the characters lack depth, but the writing style is competent and the pace brisk in this mystery story.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Masefield, John. ✓ *The Box of Delights, or, When the Wolves Were Running*; abridged by Patricia Crampton; illus. by Faith Jaques. Macmillan, 1984. 84-14404. ISBN 0-02-762740-3. 168p. \$14.95.

Ad 4-6 First published in 1935, an intricate story blends traditional lore and original fantasy to achieve a sometimes confusing fanciful story that is set at Christmas but is only partially relevant to the holiday. Kay Harker, the protagonist, is given the box of the title by a mysterious old man who comes and goes throughout the story, as obviously on the side of the angels as Abner is a representation of evil. The Box of Delights makes it possible for Kay to achieve time-travel and to teleport. A surfeit of characters clogs the story, which has some very appealing qualities (action, magic, Christmas, good triumphs over evil) but which is overcrowded and—although generally smooth in writing style—occasionally overwritten.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Mazer, Norma Fox. ✓ *Downtown*. Morrow, 1984. 84-1137. ISBN 0-688-03859-X. 216p. \$9.50.

R 7-10 Pete has been living with his uncle Gene for eight years, since he was seven, and for eight years he has been wondering where his parents are, whether he will ever see them again, and if he is being followed by the FBI. Pete's not his real name, and he has been living in fear and in hiding because his parents, ardent political activists, had blown up a college laboratory as an antiwar protest. Two people had been killed and Pete's parents had been sought by the FBI ever since. At the close of the book, Pete's mother, tired of being a fugitive, gives herself up and goes to jail; Pete then

has to decide if he will accept her suggestion to stay with her friends who are near the jail so that she can see him. This last problem—giving up his friends, disrupting his school, leaving the uncle who has been his only guardian for so many years—is typical of the burden foisted by a parent who has abandoned a child to promulgate a cause. Pete's whole life has been shaped and confined by his burden. The story has some light and tender moments, but for the most part it is a serious and sensitive consideration of a stress situation.

D.V. Devotion to a cause; Parent-child relations; Uncle-nephew relations

✓ Mohr, Joseph. ✓ *Silent Night*; illus. by Susan Jeffers. Dutton, 1984. 84-8113. ISBN 0-525-44144-1. 24p. \$12.95.

R
All
ages

In an oversize book, Jeffers uses the space to full advantage for striking paintings of the town, the manger, the Holy Family, and the worshippers at the Nativity scene. The text consists of the words of the familiar carol, for which musical notation is appended. The first scenes: Mary and Joseph travelling through the starry night, and the silent streets of Bethlehem, are particularly effective in cool blues and greens, but the composition and use of color are almost as dramatic in the interior scenes, in which the tender faces and the play of light and shadow are outstanding.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Moore, Clement Clarke. ✓ *The Night Before Christmas*; illus. by Anita Lobel. Knopf, 1984. 84-4342. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-96863-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-86863-3. 22p. Library ed. \$10.99; Trade ed. \$9.95.

R
K-2

Lobel's speaker, in her illustrations for the beloved poem by Moore, is the father of a Victorian family; the interpretations of the scenes are cozy, appropriately ornate (both the architecture in the exterior scenes and the furnishings in the interiors) in a fashion that manages to be traditional without being stodgy and that has an old-New-York charm.

C.U. Christmas

✓ Noll, Sally. ✓ *Off and Counting*; written and illus. by Sally Noll. Greenwillow, 1984. 83-16366. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-02796-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-02795-4. 22p. Library ed. \$9.55; Trade ed. \$10.50.

R
3-5
yrs.

A wind-up frog in a toy store hops about counting, up to ten) toys until, running down, it comes to a halt. A dotted line shows the leaps and circles of the frog's path, continuing from page to page. The pattern is conventional: one toy castle, two rocking horses, three parts of a toy train, four identical stuffed zebras, etc. The fact that the objects are toys should appeal to very young children; the digit illustrated is shown on each page, and the words "one" or "two" or "three" are repeated in a running frieze at the foot of each double-page spread. The illustrations are clean, bright, and spacious. Nothing revolutionary here, but it is a perfectly nice counting book.

✓ Oppenheim, Joanne. ✓ *Mrs. Peloki's Class Play*; illus. by Joyce Audy dos Santos. Dodd, 1984. 83-25457. ISBN 0-396-08178-9. 28p. \$10.95.

It is the star of the second-grade class production of "Cinderella," Stephanie, who narrates the story of a disastrous dress rehearsal and a peril-fraught assembly hall

R
2-3 production. This should evoke a recognition reflex from anyone who has ever been participant or spectator at a primary-grades school play; it's realistic, it's funny, it has a surprise ending that should appeal to younger children's sense of disaster-humor, and it's illustrated with softly colored drawings that have vitality if they lack grace.

✓
✓
Parish, Peggy. *I Can—Can You? Level 3*; illus. by Marilyn Hafner. Greenwillow, 1984. 84-1472. ISBN 0-688-03890-5. 10p. \$2.95.

Ad
2-4
yrs. One of a series ("See and Do Books") designed for very young children, this is meant to encourage motor, social, and language skills. While not highly innovatory, this brief book with its heavy board pages and didactic tone does serve to reflect the everyday lives and activities of toddlers. The protagonists Jason (white) and Jenny (black) are featured on alternate pages with a two-part text pattern: "Jason plays with his father. Do you play with your father?" followed by "Jenny can put her toys away. Can you put your toys away?"

D.V. Social attitudes

✓
✓
Peacock, Howard. *The Big Thicket of Texas: America's Ecological Wonder*; written and illus. with photographs by Howard Peacock. Little, 1984. 84-1988. ISBN 0-316-69583-1. 89p. \$13.95.

R
6-9 It is the diversity in the Big Thicket of southeast Texas that makes it unique: it incorporates eight major ecosystems. It is famous not only for this diversity and for the amazing variety of flora and fauna but also the legends that emanated from this huge, watery tract to become part of Texas folklore. The Big Thicket National Preserve (which is only a portion of the total area) was designated a national preserve in 1974. Peacock gives some historical background about the area, including the depredations by the lumber and oil industries before 1974. A section of black and white photographs gives some idea of the beauty and variety of the plant life despite the poor quality of the pictures. Only the two sides of the book jacket have color photographs that show the beauty of the plant life. A bibliography and an index are provided.

C.U. Biology; Ecology

✓
✓
Pierce, Tamora. *In the Hand of the Goddess*. Atheneum, 1984. 84-2946. ISBN 0-689-31054-4. 232p. \$12.95.

R
7-10 A second story about Alanna, who has cut her hair and bound her breasts so that she can pass as a boy and train for knighthood. In this medieval fantasy, Alanna (Alan) grows up enough to fall in love, to experience a sexual relationship, to pass the tests for knighthood, to participate in a war, and—above all—to expose and slay the wicked man who has designs on the throne and whose sorcery she must fight with her own magic. The fast-paced story ends with Alanna going off on her own to try for new adventures, and readers who have responded to the intriguing situation, the doughty heroine, and the easy flow of the story will doubtless look forward to reading about them.

✓
✓
Riley, Jocelyn. *Crazy Quilt*. Morrow, 1984. 84-1017. ISBN 0-688-03873-5. 215p. \$11.50.

In a sequel to *Only My Mouth is Smiling* (reviewed in the September 1982 issue)

R 6-9 it is again Merle, oldest of three children, who is the narrator. They live with their grandmother now; the disturbed mother who had taken them into isolation and poverty is in a hospital. Merle is torn between compassion for her mother, who wants desperately to come home, and the conviction that her mother is still very ill and needs institutional care. Fourteen, Merle is ambivalent about Grandma and her motivation, and equally ambivalent about some of her friends and classmates. She finally decides that each life is discrete and has its own pattern, just like the quilt that is a family heirloom. Serious, honest, touching, this is a perceptive book, with well-defined characters.

D.V. Grandmother-child relations; Mother-child relations

✓ Roberts, Bethany. ✓ *Waiting-for-Spring-Stories*; illus. by William Joyce. Harper, 1984. 83-49486. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-025062-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-025061-5. 31p. Library ed. \$9.89; Trade ed. \$9.95.

Ad K-2 Cuddled together in a big bed, a family of rabbits listens to Papa Rabbit's stories as they wait for spring. These brief tales can be used when there's a need for a filler in story hour, and although they are not of equal caliber, the tales stand up well in general for reading aloud. They are about small episodes, only one to do with spring, and provide enough variety, humor, and coziness to appeal to the read-aloud audience. The illustrations are pastel paintings, old-fashioned and rather sedate.

C.U. Storytelling

✓ Rockwell, Anne F. ✓ *Trucks*; written and illus. by Anne F. Rockwell. Dutton, 1984. 84-1556. ISBN 0-525-44147-6. 22p. \$8.95.

R 2-5 yrs. Cats are the drivers, workers, shoppers, firemen, etc. in a series of drawings of different kinds of trucks; the accompanying text is minimal, a series of descriptive captions like "Refrigerator trucks bring meat to the store," or "The bookmobile brings books for us to read." While this doesn't have the poster-simple elegance that is in Donald Crews' *Truck*, the pictures are adequate, bright and cheerful, and the text provides more information than does *Truck*. Too, although the pictures are a bit fussier, they have the sorts of details over which young children like to pore.

D.V. Environmental concepts

✓ Ross, Tony. ✓ *I'm Coming to Get You!*; written and illus. by Tony Ross. Dial, 1984. 84-5831. ISBN 0-8037-0119-5. 26p. \$10.95.

R 3-6 yrs. Jagged lines, brilliant colors, and strange life forms appear in the illustrations for a story about a terrible hairy monster (sharp teeth, green horns, hairy body, i.e. all the usual accoutrements) who wreaks havoc on another planet and then decides to fly to Earth. There the monster finds Tommy Brown on its radar screen and roars the threat of the title. Tommy, meanwhile, peers anxiously about for monsters as he prepares for bed—and a surprise ending, visually specific, should assure members of the lap audience that it's all a joke and that there's really nothing to fear. Fresh, funny, dramatic, and appealing.

✓ Ruckman, Ivy. ✓ *Night of the Twisters*. Crowell, 1984. 83-46168. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04409-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04408-9. 153p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

R
5-7 Both of his parents are out of the house when the tornado hits; Dan and his friend Arthur save their own lives and that of Dan's baby brother when the house crashes down over their heads. There is a long, tense series of encounters and disasters as Dan and Arthur try (successfully) to contact other members of their families, rescue an elderly neighbor, get news of friends and grandparents, and face—like others in their Nebraska town—the ravages wrought by the twisters that have hit it. Ruckman does a good job of creating and maintaining suspense, produces dialogue that sounds appropriate for a stress situation, and gives her characters some depth and differentiation.

D.V. Courage; Resourcefulness; Self-reliance.

✓ Saltzberg, Barney. ✓ *What To Say To Clara*; written and illus. by Barney Saltzberg. Atheneum, 1984. 83-15567. ISBN 0-689-31041-2. 28p. \$9.95.

Ad
K-2 Instantly smitten by the new girl in class, Otis frets and fusses about what he can say to this dazzling creature. Should he write a letter? No, that doesn't seem right. He tries a speech on his dog; that doesn't seem right either. Otis wonders if Clara likes to dance or enjoys space movies. Finally, he plucks up enough courage to speak: "Hello, Clara." "YIPPEEE!" says Clara, to end the story. Format, type-size, and brevity indicate a preschool audience, but the love-at-first-sight theme moves the potential audience range up a bit, so there is some conflict. The illustrations are awkward, childlike in execution, vigorous, mildly amusing.

D.V. Shyness, overcoming

✓ Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. ✓ *He Noticed I'm Alive... and Other Hopeful Signs*. Delacorte, 1984. 84-4329. ISBN 0-385-29351-8. 146p. \$14.95.

R
6-9 Sharmat's romances are certainly a cut above most of those that are published, but they often seem a variant of the old girl/loses/gets boy. Here, the girl is Jody Kline, the fifteen-year-old narrator, who lives with her lawyer father and has adjusted to her mother's going off to "find herself" several years earlier. The boy is Matt, three years older than Jody, handsome and charming, and the son of the super-groomed woman Dad's dating. There are misunderstandings and hurt feelings, but Jody and Matt finally get together. The characters are believable, the plot is credible if a mite frayed; the strongest aspect of the book is the style, which has humor, smoothness, and an effervescent, sunny quality even when it deals with Jody's problems.

D.V. Boy-girl relations

✓ Smith, Roger. ✓ *Gordon Goes to School*; written and illus. by Roger Smith. Oxford/Merrimack, 1984. ISBN 0-19-278202-9. 30p. \$6.95.

Ad
K-2 Bright illustrations, mixed media in cartoon style, are busy, minimally funny, occasionally grotesque, and usually filled with balloon-enclosed captions that supplement a humorous text. First published in England, the story is about a small elephant who has rambling conversations with his mother on the theme of "elephants must remember everything" and through which both demonstrate that they are forgetful. This is followed by a cross-purposes dialogue between Gordon, the baby elephant, and his exasperated teacher on the first day of school. (All characters but Gordon and his mother are human.) This has a sense of fun, but it exploits one concept and has a staccato quality.

✓ Smollin, Michael J. ✓ *Santa's Workshop*; written and illus. by Michael Smollin. Random House, 1984. 83-63315. ISBN 0-394-86747-5. 10p. \$1.95.

NR The text shows the elves making toys (with an odd production line in which a head-
2-4 less teddy bear suddenly has a head and is dressed and ready to be packed) and sort-
yrs. ing candy and loading Santa's sleigh. Abrupt, insubstantial, and crowded visually,
this may have some appeal because of the toys/elves/Christmas combination, but
it's close to sleazy when compared to the hundreds of Christmas books, old and
new, that are on the market.

✓ Sommer-Bodenburg, Angela. ✓ *My Friend the Vampire*; illus. by Amelie Glienke. Dial, 1984.
83-23930. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0046-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0045-8. 155p.
Library ed. \$9.89; Trade ed. \$9.95.

NR First published in Germany under the title *Der Kleine Vampire*, this is an uncon-
3-5 vincing and quite tedious fantasy about a boy (Tony, age nine) who becomes friends
with a boy vampire who appears at his window one night. Tony's parents become
more and more suspicious at his tales about his new friends, but when they meet the
vampire and his sister think only that they're odd. This goes nowhere, but simply
sets up a situation and expands on it without developing it. Even for young lovers of
the occult, this is slight fare.

✓ Stevenson, James. ✓ *Yuck!*; written and illus. by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1984.
83-25421. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-03830-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-03829-8. 30p.
Library ed. \$9.55; Trade ed. \$10.25.

R What could be more satisfying than to be spurned because you are young and
K-2 then to outwit the spurners? Two green-faced witches, mixing their horrible potions,
refuse to let witchlet Emma take part. She goes off with her own pot, spoon, and
"book of potions, brews, and horrible curses," and soon the two witches see signs
that Emma has bewitched the animal community far more than they ever have.
Emma describes her ingredients, the witches fly off saying "YUCK!" and Emma
and her animal friends have a good laugh at the way they have pretended that
there's been a spell and they all partake of Emma's "potion," a pot full of delicious
vegetable soup. Frivolous fun, with lively and comic drawings to extend the appeal.

✓ Sustendal, Pat. ✓ *The Trim-the-Tree Counting Book*; written and illus. by Pat Sustendal.
Random House, 1984. 83-63314. ISBN 0-394-86748-3. 10p. \$1.95.

M A book with heavy board pages, a bit over six inches square, begins with "1—One
2-4 bright star goes on the top of the tree. 2—Two gingerbread men go on next. When
yrs. can I eat them?" and concludes with ten candles and "All done!" The Christmas
theme is appealing, as is the profusion of cookies, toys, and candies, but this is
otherwise a run-of-the-mill counting book, less comprehensive and less attractive
than many that are in print. The soft pastel paintings are adequate in quality; sharp-
eyed children will probably notice that some of the tree decorations (particularly the
three golden angels, accordion-folded) are in a different position in almost every
illustration of the tree.

✓ Tchudi, Susan. ✓ *The Young Writer's Handbook*; by Susan and Stephen Tchudi. Scribner,
1984. 84-5312. ISBN 0-684-18090-1. 156p. \$12.95.

R
7-12 A very sensible and fairly comprehensive book of advice that should be useful both to those adolescents who want to write professionally or those who simply wish to improve their writing skills. Both of the authors teach English at the university level, and their text is lucid and explicit; they do not believe it is possible to teach others how to write, but that there are ways to help aspirants improve the kind of writing they've chosen to do. They give good general advice and make specific suggestions (poetry, fiction, letter-writing, school papers, etc.) and conclude with a chapter on publishing. The index is burdened by personal names (Woody Allen and Peter Gay, for example, whose comments are cited) that give no clue as to the nature of the entry, but it's a minor weakness in an otherwise substantial book.

C.U. Language Arts

✓ Tusa, Tricia. ✓ *Libby's New Glasses*; written and illus. by Tricia Tusa. Holiday House, 1984. 83-26688. ISBN 0-8234-0523-0. 28p. \$11.95.

M
K-2 Children often feel embarrassed or uncomfortable when they first wear eyeglasses, and a comforting message in a book does not go amiss—but this book is weakened by an abrupt shift from realism to fantasy. Libby so dislikes her new glasses that she runs away from home; on the beach she meets an ostrich, who's hiding its head in the sand. It seems the ostrich, too, is ashamed of its glasses. The two reassure each other, then Libby climbs on the ostrich and they enjoy seeing the details of shore life together. The illustrations have vigor, humor, and scrabbly details; the text is weak.

✓ Vincent, Gabrielle. *Merry Christmas, Ernest and Celestine*; written and illus. by Gabrielle Vincent. Greenwillow, 1984. 83-14155. Library ed. 0-688-02606-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-02605-2. 32p. Library ed. \$11.04; Trade ed. \$12.00.

R
K-2
* One of the most engaging twosomes in the picture book world, the kindly bear Ernest and his tiny ward Celestine, a mouse, are—happily—with us again. They have no money, so Ernest balks about giving a Christmas party, but Celestine reminds him that he had promised—and he agrees, one must always keep a promise. The rest of the story is filled with details of the preparation and the celebration (including a delightful episode in which Celestine is upset because Ernest disappears just as Santa Claus enters) and the deft, graceful watercolor illustrations augment and extend the story in the nicest way. A holiday bonus.

C.U. Christmas.

✓ White, Ellen Emerson. ✓ *The President's Daughter*. Avon, 1984. Paper. ISBN 0-380-88740-1. 247p. \$2.95.

R
6-9 It would have been easy to make this, both theme and setting, superficial and sensational, but it's neither; it is, instead, a sympathetic study of the results within a family of gaining national prominence and adjusting to a new life style. White makes the campaign and the election of the first woman president believable, and the story, reflecting the viewpoint of sixteen-year-old Meg, has both pace and insight as it examines the changes for Meg and her family as well as those unchanging aspects of love and trust that exist in warm, secure parent-child relationships. An added appeal is that the dialogue is animated and intelligent, spiced by an affectionate teasing between Meg and her parents or Meg and her friends.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations

✓ Wiegand, Roberta. ✓ *The Year of the Comet*. Bradbury, 1984. 84-11004. ISBN 0-02-792720-2. 133p. \$9.95.

Ad
3-5

It's the year Halley's comet was last seen, 1910, and ten-year-old Sarah is both thrilled and apprehensive, as were many other people who feared the comet would damage the earth. The comet comes and goes, and the story (a few connecting threads but no plot line) continues, in episodic fashion, to chronicle other events of the year: getting the first automobile in town, accidentally setting fire to the town's stockpile at a Fourth of July picnic, helping rescue a brother who falls through the ice while skating, etc. Pleasant but tepid, an adequate family story and period piece.

D.V. Family relations

✓ Wilder, Cherry. ✓ *Yorath the Wolf*. Atheneum, 1984. 84-2976. ISBN 0-689-31060-9. 178p. \$11.95.

Ad
7-10

The second volume in the trilogy "The Rulers of Hylor" (the first was *A Princess of the Chameln*) this is intricate in its relationships and heavy with personal and place names, but these weaknesses are compensated for by the pace of the action and the appealing personality of the protagonist, Yorath. Cast out of the royal household, as is any physically imperfect child, Yorath is saved from death by the court physician/magician; his twisted shoulder improves and he grows tall and strong in his forest cottage. By the time of late adolescence, Yorath is a powerful giant, and becomes a soldier; after some years of military life (during which he becomes known as Yorath the Wolf) he is wounded and loses his memory. When he recovers—through magical means—Yorath knows of his royal birth, rejects court life or military eminence, and retreats to a quiet life with the beautiful Owlwife he has loved most of his adult years. There is enough action to hold the reader, but the book does have some long, heavily descriptive passages that slow the pace for a time, and it does seem over-embroidered with characters, kingdoms, complex ancestral relationships, and—occasionally—episodes that do little to further the plot development.

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming

✓ Wilson, Gina. ✓ *All Ends Up*. Faber, 1984. 83-25300. ISBN 0-571-13196-4. 159p. \$13.95.

R
6-9

Claudia, the protagonist, is open and bitter about the fact that she is an illegitimate child, and she punishes her mother repeatedly for this. She's also rude to her mother's suitor, and her rancor spills over to include her only two friends, Sylvie and Anna. The refuge in her life is a great-aunt; Belle lives nearby at the seaside and repeatedly welcomes all three girls on extended visits. There are no large, dramatic events in the story, but there is fluctuation in the three-way relationship among the girls, development and change in that between Claudia and her new stepfather, and particularly a growth in understanding between Claudia and Belle, who is her emotional anchor and whose death is shattering. This has strength and consistency in characterization, it is written smoothly and perceptively; although it is set in England, the problems and concerns that are involved are universal.

D.V. Aunt-niece relationships; Death, adjustment to; Friendship values; Stepparents, adjustment to



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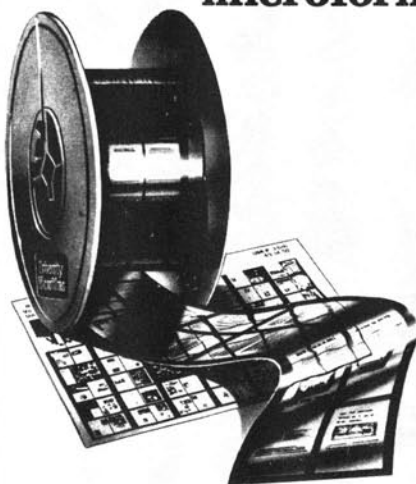
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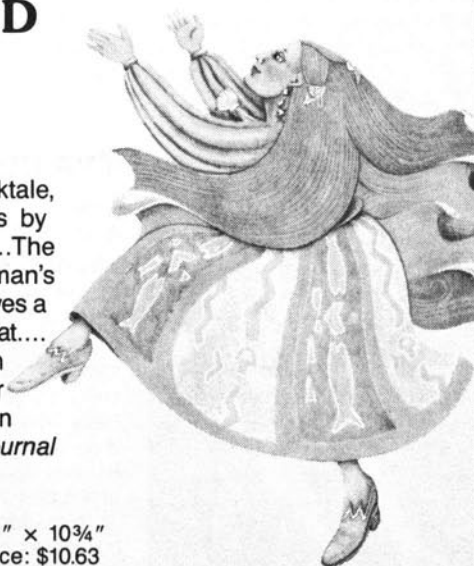
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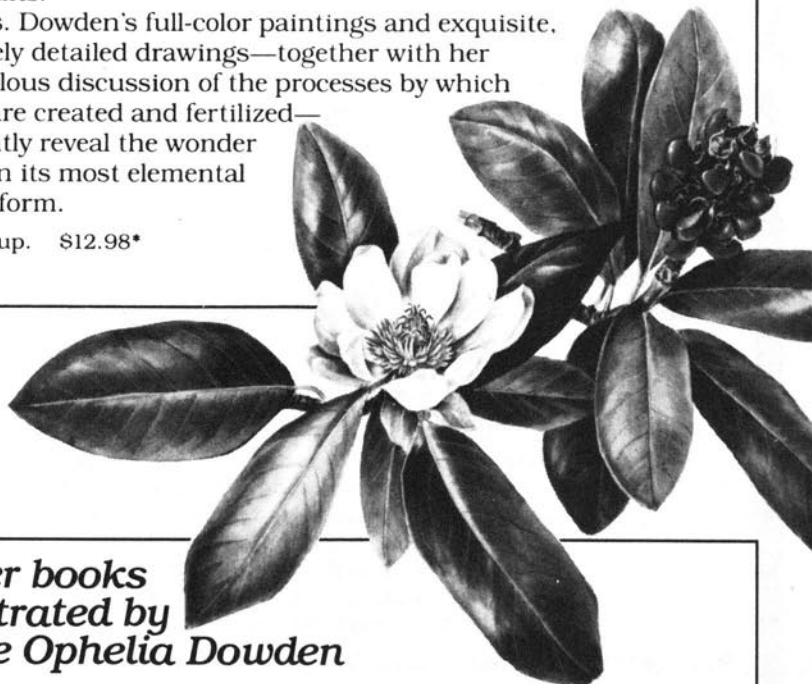
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